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CNN LIVE TODAY

California Statute Allows In-State Tuition to Illegal Aliens; Diploma Mills Pose Security Threat to U.S.

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(NEWSBREAK)

DARYN KAGAN, CNN ANCHOR: It is a well-known fact that the cost of tuition at colleges and universities is generally higher for out-of-state students, but is it fair for illegal immigrants to get a break on their tuition expenses while out-of-state students have to pay more?

CNN's Casey Wian takes a look at the tuition turmoil brewing in California.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CASEY WIAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Channing Jang and Mark Hammes are seniors of California, Davis. They're from Hawaii. And like other out-of-state students, pay about \$17,000 a year for students from California. Incredibly, even illegal aliens get the cheaper in-state tuition rate.

CHANNING JANG, U.C. DAVIS STUDENT: I don't really think it's fair that illegal immigrants who can't they don't pay any taxes, they get to have a better chance to go to university than I do.


MARK HAMMES, U.C. DAVIS STUDENT: Where can the state's money be better spent, given break immigrants who can't even continue working in the state after they graduate, or to other U.S. citizens know I intend to stay in California.

WIAN: Activists filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of 60,000 out-of-state U.S. students forced to pay California. They say the state has been violating a federal law since it began giving illegal aliens reduced tuition.

KRIS KOBACH, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI: It's an incentive to stay illegally in California. And furthermore a very, very valuable benefit worth more than \$130,000 in the U.C. system to stay here legally. A lawsuit has also been filed in Missouri.

WIAN: California is one of nine states that offer discounted tuition to illegal aliens. A lawsuit has also been filed in Kansas.

A spokesman for the University of California system says it believes in-state tuition for illegal aliens is a violation of federal law. The courts will decide who's right. But many immigration reform advocates say the policy is wrong. IRA MEHLMAN, FED. FOR AMERICAN IMM. REFORM: We're depriving people who have brought their families here.



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benefits and then extending those very same benefits to the children of people who broke the law.

WIAN: When California lawmakers first tried to approve reduced tuition for illegal aliens, the law was governor Gray Davis. It eventually passed without his signature.

(on camera): Meanwhile, students like Channing and Mark are taking on massive debts and working jobs to make up a difference in benefits offered to illegal aliens and other California resident students

Casey Wian, CNN, Sacramento, California.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

KAGAN: There's also this on the education beat. America's so-called diploma mills are coming under federal authorities investigate how bogus college degrees can provide the needed cover for terrorists country.

CNN's Drew Griffin investigates that.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

DREW GRIFFIN, CNN INVESTIGATIVE CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): This is Abu Salsabil Hassan of Science degree in chemistry from Rochville University.

Who is Omar? The federal government says he's an explosives and chemical weapons expert for the Qaeda. So how did this alleged terrorist with a five million dollar bounty on his head earn a Masters in this American university?

Well, we earned it for him with \$500 and an Internet connection. And the United States district attorney in Washington, says there could be thousands of potential terrorists who have done what we just did.

JIM MCDEVITT, U.S. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, EASTERN DISTRICT, WASHINGTON STATE: This is because this is one -- not the only one, but one of many kinds of documents or kinds of things that you know, gain credibility, build your -- build up your portfolio, and maybe gain access into the country.

GRIFFIN: This past October, McDevitt and federal agents broke up what they allege could be one of diploma mills in the country. They say a couple living in this home outside Spokane, Washington, ran which awarded thousands of fake degrees from legitimate sounding schools, Saint Regis University, University, and several others.

The diplomas, like the one we bought Abu Salsabil Hassan Omar, all look real, some coming with full certificates of accreditation from what looks like a government agency. According to the U.S. attorney on and buy what appears to be an advanced degree. It sounded like just another scam, until McDevitt almost half the bogus degrees were being purchased overseas, and mostly from so-called students in

MCDEVITT: Terrorists, and let's say al Qaeda, who has proven themselves to be very, very patient, very intelligent, and are willing to go to great lengths to -- to gain entry or to do harm to the country.

GRIFFIN: There is no evidence a bogus diploma has been used by a potential terrorist to gain access, but McDevitt fears it is possible.

H-1B visas can be issued to anyone who is highly skilled and can get a job in the U.S. McDevitt is concerned an advanced degree could be the first step for someone in a terrorist sleeper cell.

And to prove just how troublesome the problem is, Secret Service agents did what we did, bought the a perfect terrorist candidate, although theirs was fictional.

Mohammed Syed was the applicant, no formal education but years of chemical training and chemical the Syrian army. The Secret Service even added to Syed's application that he needed a degree quickly find employment and obtain an H-1B visa, allowing him to stay in the U.S.

In less than a month, the imaginary Syrian army expert was notified, James Monroe University was a advanced degrees in engineering and chemistry, all for \$1,277.

GRIFFIN (on camera): What is surprising is just how this potential hole in homeland security was disclosed, the fake universities selling fake degrees were done in by a real physics professor from the University of Illinois, who was conducting more of his own investigation than a research project.

PROFESSOR GEORGE GOLLIN, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS: What happened was, we were getting on university computers that it was actually interfering with day-to-day operations.

GRIFFIN (voice-over): Gollin was intrigued. He has spent years gaining his advanced education the thought of pop-up ads offering an easy way out was more than a little annoying. So, he began to dig i found was a network of universities wrapped around the Saint Regis name.

GRIFFIN: He thought it was all just a big scam. Then, this native New Yorker began to think about so 9/11.

GOLLIN: This is really scaring me, because I had tended to think of diploma mills as more of a consu problem. And seeing that this was a much better developed organization, with much more -- a much infrastructure, with much broader practices, aims, alarmed me.

GRIFFIN: With Gollin's information, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Secret Service launched a mul investigation. Eight people have been indicted so far. All have pleaded not guilty. And the U.S. attorn says one ring that pumped out thousands and thousands of fake diplomas a year is shut down.

The problem is, there are plenty more diploma mills on the Web, willing to graduate anyone with a cre Remember the degree we bought from Rochville University for a wanted terrorist? We tried to find Rc mails to the site and got an automated response telling us our student counselor would contact us so happened.

The diploma itself was mailed from the United Arab Emirates. Rochville related Web sites and e-mail: Karachi, Pakistan; Sarasota, Florida; a Web hosting site in Atlanta; and a Web billing address in this building in Dover, Delaware.

We couldn't find evidence of Rochville University at any of these locations.

(on camera): This is as close as we have come to finding Rochville University. Its domain name is reg Joseph Lee in this apartment building outside of Boston, suite 401. The problem is, nobody we could the university, ever heard of Joseph Lee, and the manager says there's not even a suite by that numl

(voice-over): As far as we know, Rochville is still out there, still willing to award degrees to anyone wi suspected al Qaeda bomb maker named Omar.

Drew Griffin, CNN, Malden, Massachusetts.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

KAGAN: We'll look at business news ahead. Are better days ahead for General Motors? Its CEO say Schaffler will be along to explain.

Plus, the roar of a mighty ape in the theaters again. Mr. Moviefone joins us to talk about King Kong's

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KAGAN: And this just in to CNN. A prosecutor in Lancaster, Pennsylvania says he's going to seek th against an 18-year-old who was accused of shooting to death his 14-year-old girlfriend's parents.

The district attorney saying that he will go for the death penalty against David Ludwig, and Ludwig is both Michael and Katherine Borden in their home on November 14th, when he was told by the father longer see his 14-year-old daughter Kara Beth Borden. They are also adding on a sexual-assault cha charges that David Ludwig now faces. That according to the Associated Press. More on that as news Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Right now a break. We're back after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED ACTRESS: Zi Ho (ph) is my new protege. Focus on your studies, music, the art of cc

UNIDENTIFIED ACTRESS: Now we are rivals.

UNIDENTIFIED ACTRESS: The true geisha can stop a man in his tracks with a single look.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KAGAN: Scenes from "Memoirs of a Geisha." Each week, Mr. Moviefone brings us the real deal on w movies.

Russ Leatherman here with some biggies to choose from, because we're at the peak of the holiday s from L.A., Russ, hello.

RUSS LEATHERMAN, MR. MOVIEFONE: Hey, Daryn, how are you?

KAGAN: I'm doing great. I think you brought along your fantasy movie, because, you know, the Geist for you.

LEATHERMAN: Come on now. You what, I've got to tell you, I'm giddy like a little girl today, Daryn, b such a great list of movies in theaters right now.

This is a good movie. This is not a great movie. "Memoirs of a Geisha." Rob Marshall, who brought u brings us this movie. It's about a young girl who's sold into slavery and becomes the world's most fan I have to tell you, personally, it's beautiful to look at. Every shot looks like it could be on a postcard.

But there was something lost in the translation for me and I don't know if it's because it was Chinese Japanese, speaking English. I'm not sure what happened, but I found it a little tedious, a little long. It's hours and not particularly compelling. So it's OK. If you like the book, if you like the literature, I think y movie. For everybody else, I think they're going to be a little lost.

KAGAN: All right. As we move quickly through some other movie here -- totally different type of movie Stone," Sarah Jessica Parker. Her first big movie since "Sex and the City."

LEATHERMAN: Yes, and I think she's made a good choice here. This is a pretty good movie, actually "Meet the Parents" for the holidays. She plays a fiance that comes to meet the family Stone, and of c crazy characters who decide to torture her and make her life miserable.

I think this is a pretty good movie. It's a comedy, but it's got some biting satire. Some of the things th really happen when you actually bring somebody home to meet the family. So I like this movie, I'm in.

KAGAN: OK, we only have 45 seconds left. We have to talk about "The Producers." It has her husba Broderick and Nathan Lane. Yes or no?

LEATHERMAN: Yes or no, in or out? I'm in-ish, out-ish. And here's why. It's directed just like the stag little awkward at first. You have a hard time getting used to the way it's shot, the way it's directed. But shows up, once the cast gets cooking, it's a lot of fun. So I like this movie. I think you should go checl

KAGAN: And finally, blockbuster of the season appears to be "King Kong."

LEATHERMAN: Yes, this is...

KAGAN: Are you a fan?

LEATHERMAN: I'm a huge fan. I think this is one of the best movies of the year. I think it will be abso this is what you go to the movies for. You feel good about taking your 10 bucks and watching this thir everything about it. Go see "King Kong."

KAGAN: OK, thanks for the suggestions. Russ Leatherman, Mr. Moviefone, good to see you.

LEATHERMAN: Look, Daryn, it's snowing in L.A.!

KAGAN: You're crazy. Crazy.

LEATHERMAN: You crazy. You crazy.

KAGAN: You are crazy. Thanks, Russ.

LEATHERMAN: Bye, Daryn.

KAGAN: We're talking "King Kong." Beats its chest at the box office. Here is a little glimpse of what it gorilla back to the movie screen.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

TONY HARRIS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: The epic three-hour remake of "King Kong" cost about \$1 billion to make. That makes it about 20 times more expensive than the original 1933 version, which cost about today's money. Of course, the price of a movie ticket was only 15 cents back then. Director Peter Jackson lost about 70 pounds since he won the Oscar last year for the final installment of "Lord of the Rings." says he simply switched from burgers to yogurt and muesli.

"King Kong" apparently lost some weight as well. In the 1933 version, Kong was described as 50 feet tall. In today's remake, he was only about 25 feet tall. The rest is Hollywood magic.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

KAGAN: And you can read much more about the new "King Kong" at CNN.com/entertainment. Reviewer writes on our Web site that Peter Jackson's film is, in a single word -- Paul calls it "awesome."

It is 10:53 in New York, 7:53 in San Francisco. Stay with us. We're back with a quick check of your mail. Plus, we're going to tell you what a Japanese zoo is doing to make sure these little guys can still fit in. Stick around. We're back after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KAGAN: It's the march of the porky penguins at a zoo in northern Japan. To withstand the cold weather, they stand still for long periods and so they put on pounds. OK, we get that. Now, these penguins have been on an exercise regimen: 500 yard walks twice a day from now until April. They're feeling the pain. Many too cookies or something like that.

(WEATHER REPORT)

KAGAN: We are going to take a fascinating look at the colorful look at an era that you remember from black and white pictures. We're going to preview an exhibit that will literally change the way you look

And later in the hour, imagine returning to your car from a long day and finding this as a surprise. We will show you how heartbreak lead to this holiday gift as the second hour of CNN LIVE TODAY begins right now.

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